

Message Text

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EXDIS

C O R R E C T E D C O P Y (CAPTION CHANGE EXDIS VICE NODIS)

FOR AMBASSADOR SILBERMAN, PRESIDENTIAL ENVOY FOR ILOO AFFAIRS

E.O. 11652: XGDS-3

TAGS: PORT, ILO

SUBJ: ILO PRESIDENTIAL CANDIDACY - ILO CONFERENCE

REF: MELBOURNE 293

1. FOLLOWING COMMENTS ARE IN REPLY TO YOUR QUESTIONS
REGARDING LABOR MINISTER TOMAS ROSA:

(A) POLITICAL VIEWS: ROSA'S VIEWS ARE BEST DEFINED BY THE
DECLARATION OF THE ARMED FORCES MOVEMENT WHICH OVER-
THREW CAETANO GOVERNMENT IN APRIL 1974. THIS DOCUMENT,
WHICH ROSA STILL CONSIDERS AS PERSONAL GUIDELINE, IS A CALL
FOR DEMOCRATIC PROCEDURES AND CIVIL LIBERTIES ENTIRELY
CONSISTENT WITH OUR OWN PHILOSOPHY. DURING 1975 WHEN
COMMUNIST PARTY (PCP) SUCCEEDED IN DELUDING MUCH OF THE AFM
AND THE PORTUGUESE PUBLIC INTO BELIEF THAT ORIGINAL PURPOSE
OF AFM HAD BEEN TO INSTALL NARROWLY-DEFINED SOCIALIST FORM OF
GOVERNMENT, ROSA BEGAN TO EXPRESS RESERVATIONS OVER TREND OF
EVENTS. HE PUBLICLY IDENTIFIED HIMSELF WITH THE "MELO ANTUNES
NINE" WHEN THIS GROUP BROKE WITH THE PRO-PCP GONCALVES
GOVERNMENT, AN ACT WHICH TOOK BOTH PERSONAL COURAGE
AND POLITICAL CONVICTION.

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-- ROSA HAS PERFORMED WELL AS MINISTER, NOT ALLOWING

CONSIDERABLE DAY-TO-DAY POLITICAL PRESSURES INCUMBENT WITH JOB TO DIVERT HIM FROM PRINCIPAL TASKS OF PROVIDING POLICY GUIDANCE AND DIRECTION TO MINISTRY. HE HAS DONE QN ADEPT JOB OF RIDDING MINISTRY OF PCP SUPPORTERS WHO PREVIOUSLY CONTROLLED MANY IMPORTANT POSITIONS. HIS DECISIONS HAVE BEEN PRAGMATIC RATHER THAN IDEOLOGICALLY BASED. HE RECOGNIZES THE IMPORTANCE OF FOREIGN INVESTMENT FOR ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT. AMERICAN BUSINESSMEN GENERALLY FEEL THEY ARE FAIRLY TREATED BUT AT SAME TIME ROSA HAS NOT YIELDED TO PRESSURES FROM MULTINATIONAL FIRMS FOR CONCESSIONS IN PORTUGAL'S TOUGH NEW LABOR LEGISLATION. NEITHER HAS HE YIELDED (WITH ONE NOTABLE EXCEPTION) TO PRESSURES FROM UNIONS FOR DECREED WAGE INCREASES.

-- EIGHTEEN MONTHS AGO ROSA ADVOCATED YUGOSLAVIA OR SWEDEN AS MODELS WHICH PORTUGAL MIGHT EMULATE. HE HAS SINCE SHIFTED MORE TO THE BELIEF THAT PORTUGAL SHOULD FOLLOW THE PATTERN OF EUROPEAN DEMOCRACIES SUCH AS FRANCE OF THE FRG.

-- HE HAS NEVER CLEARLY IDENTIFIED HIMSELF WITH ANY POLITICAL PARTY BUT EARLIER HIS VIEWS WERE MOST CLOSELY ALIGNED WITH THE (MODERATE) MARIO SOARES WING OF THE SOCIALIST PARTY. THE SOCIALISTS STRONGLY SUPPORTED HIM FOR LABOR MINISTER WHEN THE SIXTH PROVISIONAL GOVERNMENT WAS BEING FORMED. HE RECENTLY CRITICIZED LEFT-WING SOCIALISTS AS "IMPRAC-TICAL" AND INDICATED SYMPATHY FOR THE SOCIAL DEMOCRATIC LINE OF THE POPULAR DEMOCRATIC PARTY (PPD). IN PART THIS MAY BE AN EXERCISE IN POLITICAL REALISM SINCE THE SOCIALISTS AND THE PPD ARE THE TWO PARTIES FAVORED TO WIN THE FORTHCOMING ELECTIONS.

(B) LIKELIHOOD OF ROSA BEING IN OFFICE IN JUNE: THIS IS UNCERTAIN. ROSA IS A POLITICAL ANIMAL AND LOVES THE INTRIGUE AND MANEUVER OF POLITICS. HE IS CAREFULLY KEEPING HIS FENCES MENDED WITH BOTH THE SOCIALISTS AND THE PPD. MOST PORTUGUESE POLITICAL OBSERVERS WOULD GIVE HIM GOOD MARKS FOR HIS PERFORMANCE AS MINISTER, AND HE WILL CERTAINLY BE A MAJOR CONTENDER FOR THE JOB WHEN A NEW GOVERNMENT IS FORMED FOLLOWING THE CONFIDENTIAL

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LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY ELECTIONS. AT SAME TIME, THE GOVERNMENT'S NEW WAGE POLICY DUE TO BE ANNOUNCED SOON WILL FALL SHORT OF WORKERS DEMANDS AND WILL MAKE ROSA INPOPULAR WITH UNIONS.

A NEW GOVERNMENT MIGHT BE WILLINT TO SACRIFICE ROSA IN

ORDER TO GET OFF TO A FRESH START WITH LABOR.
VP(C) ROSA CLAIMS TO PREFER WORKING BEHIND THE SCENES

RATHER THAN TAKING THE LEADING ROLE. IT IS A ROLE
HE HAS PLAYED EXTREMELY WELL OVER THE PAST YEAR.

HOWEVER, GIVEN THE OPPORTUNITY TO BECOME ILO CONFERENCE
PRESIDENT HE WOULD ALMOST CERTAINLY ACCEPT.

(D) OTHER CONSIDERATION OF ROSA UNDERSTANDS SOME ENGLISH

BUT IS UNABLE TO CONVERSE IN ENGLISH. HE REPORTEDLY
SPEAKS
FRENCH WELL. HE WOULD PROBABLY BE WEAK IN PARLIAMENTARY PRO-
CEDURE.

(E) ROSA'S CANDIDACY FOR PRESIDENCY ON ILO CONFERENCE
WOULD STRENGTHEN HIS POSITION HERE AND WOULD BE A POSITIVE
DEVELOPMENT FROM THE POINT OF VIEW OF U.S. INTERESTS
IN PORTUGAL. USG SUPPORT FOR ROSA'S CANDIDACY WOULD ALSO
BE FAVORABLY RECEIVED BY THE GOP.
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